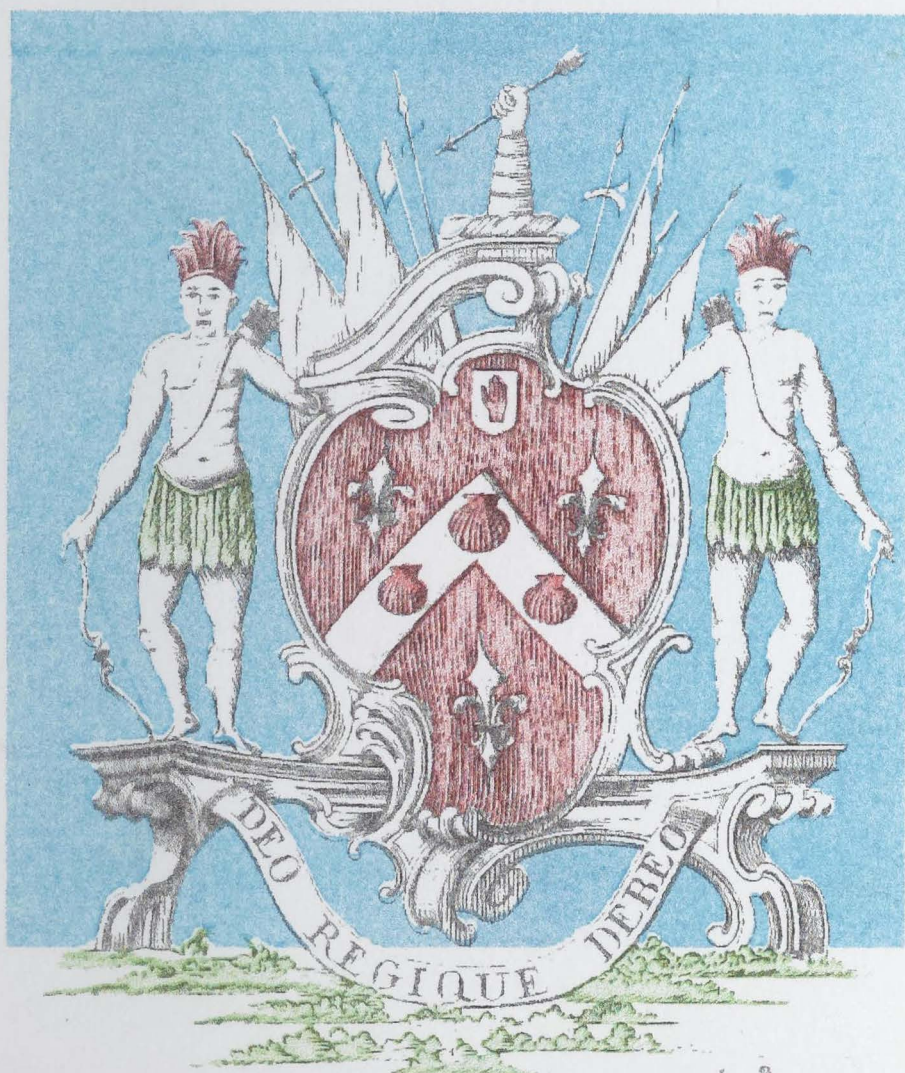


MOHAWK

ANGLICAN

FREEMASONS



Peter Lamborn Wilson

1871

MOHAWK — ANGLICAN — FREEMASONS —

by Peter Lamborn Wilson



ALTHOUGH the neologism “*episcopaganism*” may sound attractive to some, my readers might well ask whether it be mere fantasy or if history can offer any actual authentic examples, capable of inspiring a hypothetical or existent contemporary practice. Let us loosely define our term as a synthesis or syncretism or just a mixture of some pagan “polytheist” religion(s) with some form of Anglicanism, and explore the historical record for any actual phenomena.

You may have been assigned to read in high school Nathaniel Hawthorne’s tale, “The Maypole of Merry Mount” and imagine it no more than a fantasy. In fact, nearly every word of it, however fantastic, can be verified from 17th-century texts such as Bradford’s *History of Plimouth Plantation* or Thomas Morton’s *New England Canaan* (1637). You may recall that Morton, an Anglican pioneer, settled near the Plymouth colony and its “Pilgrim” Puritan fanatics; that he made friends with the Wampanoag Indians (whom the Pilgrims considered to be savage devils); that together Morton and the natives celebrated May Day (Beltane)¹ by dancing around a maypole and quaffing wine; that Miles Standish (the Pilgrim “policeman”) busted him for blasphemy, and that he was exiled back to England more-or-less in chains. All true.

1 The first day of Summer in the Celtic pagan calendar,

Morton called his own book *Canaan*, I believe, as a sly dig at the Pilgrims, hinting in effect that if they were the Israelites then he and his motley crew were the pagan Canaanites. As for the maypole, Archbishop Laud in the *Book of Sports* gave the Anglican seal of approval to such practices (along with Church Ales and Boy Bishops)—to the everlasting fury of the Puritans (who eventually beheaded Laud for his bold ideas). Morton however upped the ante in *Canaan* by quoting his own poem, supposedly chanted while dancing around the pole, invoking Venus and Bacchus. Of course, Renaissance poets were always flirting with Greco-Roman paganism without necessarily ceasing to be Christians. Morton's poetic polytheism never ruled out his latitudinarian Anglicanism. Why shouldn't religion be *merrie*?

IN North America any mix of Christianity with paganism would most often likely originate with an existential appreciation of either the African or the native Indian pagan tradition. For instance it can be said categorically that Santeria or Voudoun should be seen as a mixture of Roman Catholicism with African spiritualities. In recent times some activists within these sects have militated against the Catholic heritage and attempted to “purify the faith” back toward its African roots. But in my interpretation Catholicism is not merely a mask or camouflage but an integral aspect of the religion. “Santeria” even takes its name from the *saints*, who are syncretized with the great African spirits or deities, as well as certain indigenous Indian spirits (and even Islamic or Chinese spirits in some sects such as Candomblé). In Voodoo, the New Orleans offshoot of Haitian Voudoun, this syncretism becomes the very essence of the faith, *sine qua non*—and even more so in Hoodoo, the general American diffusion of the tradition.²

It has often been pointed out that Catholicism, even in Europe, and especially prior to the Counter-Reformation and (more recently) Vatican II, exhibits—from a “comparative-religion” perspective—certain crypto-pagan characteristics. Just two examples: the St Martin of popular folklore appears as a kind of Rabelaisian avatar of Dionysus as god of the vine, of drunkenness and gluttony; and Mary of course is a perfect mirror of Isis. These “pagan” aspects of Catholicism were made to disappear in Counter-Reformation reforms. But *Anglo-Catholicism* still preserves many of them, as if in a living amber of faith. It's possible for Anglicans to be “more Catholic than the Pope”; and therefore we can ask if a phenomenon like Episcopaganism might come to exist.

If Merry Mount were the sole example—nipped in the bud!—we'd

2 See Ishmael Reed's “Hoodoo Manifesto” and my own (and Tamara González's) *Hoodoo Metaphysics* (2019).

resign our quest. But in fact there exist other examples, not far away in place (North East America) or time (18th century).

IN 1710 four “Indian Kings” from New York visited England, where they met Queen Anne and made a big social hit. It seems that three of these ambassadors can be identified as Mohawk and one as a “River Indian” (perhaps a Mohican?). Since the Queen subsequently donated sets of altar silver for the use of Mohawks and Onondagas, perhaps one was a member of the latter tribe. (The Five Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy were Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca, later joined by the Tuscarora in 1723, making Six Nations). In any case all four “kings” came from “Upstate” New York, and all four expressed an interest in Anglicanism. A chapel was subsequently (1712) built for Mohawks at the “Lower Castle,” their easternmost settlement, near the confluence of the Mohawk River and the Schoharie, at the English settlement known as Ft. Hunter. The chapel eventually disappeared to make way for the Erie Canal, but its Parsonage still remains. The Mohawk silver went to Canada after the Revolution along with Loyalist Mohawks. The Onondaga never got their silver because they never built a chapel; the treasure can still be seen at St Peter’s Church in Albany, and has been the focus of controversy.³

Sir William Johnson, the great Indian agent (whom we’ll discuss later) built a small wooden church in collaboration with the Mohawks of the Upper Castle, Canojaharie (not to be confused with the modern town of that name) in 1769, which still stands today despite many repairs and vicissitudes, and possesses a powerful *aura* or *feng shui* or *mana* (pictured on page 10). Later Anglican churches were built for Iroquois congregations at Niagara and in Canada, etc.—but I have not seen them. Anglican missionaries were well-received by some Mohawks, it seems.

Most of the Mohawks who embraced Christianity to some degree identified as Anglican—and during the Revolution many Mohawks supported Britain’s claim and fought along with Loyalist forces. They had practical realistic reasons for their alliance.⁴ But their attraction to Anglicanism was not merely political. Sir William Johnson, the great Indian agent who was made one of only two American baronets,⁵ came to Upstate New York from Ireland, County Meath, from an “Old English” Catholic family

3 See Joscelyn Godwin, “Queen Anne’s Gift of Silver to the Onondaga Chapel” in *Silver Studies*.

4 As I’ve discussed in my book, *The American Revolution as a Gigantic Real Estate Scam* (Autonomedia, 2019).

5 His descendants still have the title “Baronets of New York” although they have lived in England for generations.

known as MacShanes ("Sons of John"), a branch of the royal O'Neills of the Fews, and descended from the Irish Catholic Saint Oliver Plunkett.⁶ But Sir William's branch of the family—once staunchly Jacobite—had converted to Anglicanism, a process discussed in fascinating detail by Fintan O'Toole in his life of Sir William, *White Savage*. He arrived in America under the patronage of his uncle Sir Peter Warren, another convert, who attained success as an Admiral and landowner (and a founder of Greenwich Village in New York City). Warren owned a large tract that included land around Ft Hunter on the Mohawk river, and William Johnson settled near there (at a site across the River now called Ft Johnson; his house still stands there). He began dealing with the Mohawks in beaver pelts and was soon wealthy in his own right.

William seems genuinely to have enjoyed the friendship of the Mohawks, especially "King Hendrick," one of the "Four Kings" who visited England and met Queen Anne. William learned to speak Mohawk, shared his home and dinner table with Indians, and took an "Indian wife" named Molly Brant, a beautiful, brilliant, and high-born⁷ woman. Molly had a younger brother named Joseph Brant who showed great promise as a boy. William Johnson decided to have Joseph educated at a missionary school in Connecticut, run by the Rev. Eleazar Wheelock (later the founder of Dartmouth College). There Joseph learned gentleman's values, and to read and write English;—but it's important to note that he did not come to share the school's nonconformist or Presbyterian-Puritan religion. He followed his brother-in-law Sir William Johnson into the Anglican faith. In fact, he soon grew unhappy at school, and returned to Mohawk country to become a warrior.

In this little article it's not my intention to offer complete or even very extensive biographies of Sir William or Joseph Brant; the interested reader can use the Bibliography here to pursue their fascinating histories. My intention is limited to a brief analysis of their *religion*—which, to some extent, was shared—and can be characterized as a sort of "episcopaganism" or Anglican/Mohawk syncretism, mediated by Freemasonry. I found it odd that none of the sources I explored for their biographies seemed to notice the sheer strangeness of their faith or to discuss it as a form of syncretism. Perhaps the fact that the Revolution (and the defeat of the

6 Primate of All Ireland, beheaded by the English, London, 1681, Saint and Martyr.

7 The Iroquois are matrilineal and aristocratic; titles are passed on to men by the women, who also have an important role in diplomacy. Molly Brant's children were "noble."

Mohawk/Loyalist forces in Upstate New York)⁸ put an end to this nascent religious movement, have resulted in a certain historical amnesia.

It has been said that the Mohawks (and some other Iroquois) enjoyed the ritual and “theatrical” aspects of Anglicanism, its use of vestments and incense, music and poetic liturgy; it may also be true, as we shall see, that Anglicanism proved more popular than the more puritanical Christian sects that attempted to impose extreme forms of moralism and theological anxiety (about predestination and Hell, etc.) on a culture that—by comparison—seemed more liberal and, shall we say, life-affirming. In any case, for the Mohawks, Anglicanism was in part a *political* choice, given their tactical and historical links with England. Brant’s parents, it seems, were already Anglicans when they married. Peter Tehonwaghkwangeraghkwa and his wife Margaret were wed in the Ft Hunter chapel in 1741 by Henry Barclay (Kelsay 40).⁹

Barclay knew some Mohawk and began the project of translating liturgy and scripture. This was continued by the next minister at Ft Hunter, Rev. John Stuart.

Ft Hunter was built next to the “Lower Castle”—Tiononderoge—the “Eastern Door” of the Iroquois “Long House” (i.e., the Confederation of Tribes, the Haudenosaunee). Today almost nothing remains of any of this complex (it was basically destroyed to build the Erie Canal)—but, as I mentioned above, the Parsonage still survives several miles away (pictured on page 10). There Rev. Stuart took up residence, eventually to be arrested as a Loyalist, to hide Queen Anne’s silver under the floor, to escape to Canada and never come back. The Mohawks rescued their silver and delivered it to their congregation in Canada (Berleth 243).¹⁰

Both Sir William and Brant supported missionary work and built (or helped to build) churches. Sir William took a major role in founding St. George’s (1759) in Schenectady, still standing elegantly in the old stockade district near the River (—very picturesque, like Greenwich Village, with a nice statue of a Mohawk sachem). During the Revolution the church was considered a Tory rendezvous and was wrecked by Patriots. Later in the

8 Despite Brant’s brilliance as a guerilla strategist, who rarely commanded more than 500-1000 combatants, who hardly ever lost a battle—and yet lost the War.

9 He baptized Sir William’s firstborn son and daughter; he was the second incumbent at Ft Hunter; in 1745 he was transferred to Trinity Wall Street in NYC. His father was Rev. Thomas Barclay of St Peter’s church in Ft Orange (Albany)—(Berleth 22 and 325 n. 30). The Henry Barclay who founded Barclay Heights in Saugerties, NY was Rev. Henry’s grandson.

10 Kelsay (525) says Stuart himself went back to rescue the silver.

18th century a Freemason lodge met here (Berleth 306-7, 347 n. 23). Sir William also built St John's in Johnstown (the town he founded and lived in) in 1765-6, rebuilt in 1772, just two years before his death.¹¹ It was open on the west so Indians could sit on the ground during services. Brant built the still-existent churches in the Upper Castle (as described above) and in Grand River, upper Canada, where he fled after the Revolution. The Mohawk silver ended up there, and Joseph later donated a bell (Stone II 395-8).

ONE senses in Sir William's religious attitude a certain broad spirit that could transcend religiosity itself. The famous Puritan divine Jonathan Edwards called Johnson "a man of not much religion," and there's no mistaking the Baronet's distaste for Puritans like Edwards or Wheelock, who (as Johnson put it) tried "to abolish at once the Indians' most innocent customs, dances, and rejoicing at marriages." Far from improving the Indian, this oppression merely "exchanged natural morality for a set of gloomy ideas . . . From these Congregationalists, the Indians imbibe an air of the most enthusiastical cant . . . intermixed with the greatest distortion of the features and zealous belchings of the spirit, resembling the most bigoted Puritans, their whole time being spent in singing psalms amongst the country people, whereby they neglect their hunting and most worldly affairs, and are, in short, become very worthless members of society" (Taylor 98).

Johnson saw the missionaries' words as "a front for New England land speculators" as Taylor says (61)—and noted that the Indians were well aware of such motives. He believed that Anglican teachings were more honest and better suited to Indian values (and of course, to his own interests)—hence his support for Anglican schools and churches. One Anglican leader proclaimed that "although Sir William, like Solomon, has been eminent in his Pleasures with the brown ladies, yet he may lay the Foundation of a Building in the Mohawk Country that may be of more real use, than the very splendid Temple that Solomon built" (Taylor 61).

The reference to Solomon's Temple is intriguing, given Sir William's enthusiasm for Freemasonry. His spirit of toleration extended to Scottish Catholics (refugees from the Anti-Jacobite Highland "clearances") and German ("Palatine") Lutherans. But narrow-minded bigoted Puritanism he could not abide.

As for Joseph Brant's religion, he was seen by some observers as quite serious about his Christian faith, and he was friendly toward several missionaries ("His house is an asylum for the missionaries in that wilderness," one of them said) (Stone I 24). Later we'll look closely at Joseph's

¹¹ And eventually entirely rebuilt.

enthusiasm for translating Christian texts into Mohawk. But we should recall that he “dropped out” of Wheelock’s Indian school; and we’ll note that some missionaries later doubted his orthodoxy. Brant is far too complex a character to label as simply an Anglican convert. He too, after all, was *also* a Freemason—and an Indian.

No Indian could ever wholly disagree with the Mohawk chief who once told an Anglican missionary: “You Christians were so wicked as to crucify your god, and now he is angry with you, and therefore to pacify him, you endeavor to persuade us to serve him, but why would we? We never heard of him till Christians came here. He is not angry with us. We never did him any hurt.” (Flexner 292)

Brant’s early biographer W.L. Stone reserves judgement on Joseph’s true religious ideas. “Whether he was himself a man of experimental religion, in the evangelical sense,” he does not make so bold as to decide (II 431)—but he recognizes that Brant devoted a good deal of his life’s energy and resources to the Anglican cause, advocating for the Society for Propagation of the Gospel, urging the Archbishop of Canterbury to appoint American bishops,¹² supporting the Faith in general. Brant’s dislike and distrust of Puritans was no doubt based on negative impressions left by his education in Wheelock’s school, as well as the influence of Sir William—but ultimately his objections were *political*: he noted that the Mohawks had at first mistaken the New England missionaries for “messengers of Peace, but we were soon surprisingly undeceived when we found soon after that they came to sow the seeds of discord among our People in order to Alienate our ancient attachments and Alliance from the King our Father, and join them in Rebellion against him.” As Taylor rightly observes (75), “Brant looked to the Great King” (whom he’d met personally, of course) “to protect Indian lands from covetous colonists.” And beyond the “Great King”?

“... The wonderful things which Brant saw all about him in nature held his mind in a spell. To him there was One who had created all things, and who was ever ready and willing to sustain his children. On one occasion in council Brant spoke of the primitive freedom of the Indian people, and then exclaimed: ‘This country was given to us by the Great Spirit above; we wish to enjoy it.’ He went on to tell how the Indians had tried to get peace, how their efforts had failed, and how their patience was now all

¹² During the Colonial period, the English Church never appointed any American bishops, and Americans who desired ordination as priests had to travel to England. Apparently Canterbury feared the possibility of schism and in fact the first Bishops in America were Non-Jurors, Jacobite schismatics: Bishop Talbot of Burlington, New Jersey (d. 1722), and even Samuel Seabury of Connecticut, who later reconciled with Canterbury and became the first approved Episcopalian Bishop in America (1789).

gone. Yet there was one covert in which they might find shelter in time of storm. 'We therefore throw ourselves ... under the protection of the Great Spirit above, who, we hope, will order all things for the best.'"¹³

Not everyone found Brant to be orthodox and pious, however. Rev. John Stuart quarreled with him over his second marriage, and it seems Brant went off in a huff to find a German minister to perform the ceremony. Brant and Stuart reconciled, but in 1784 the missionary claimed to have found Brant "greatly changed"; he seemed cynical, even dared to criticize the King. Stuart blamed the "freethinkers" Brant had met during his trips to England. Did this mean *Freemasons*? (Kelsey 353)

One of Brant's cynical remarks was, "I have read your bible formerly, and should have thought it divine, if the practices of the most zealous professor had corresponded with his profession." (*ibid.*, 545) A traveler, one Patrick Campbell, in 1792 visited Brant in Grand River. Over the post-prandial port and nuts, Brant asked Campbell if he thought that Indians who had never heard the Gospel could still enter heaven. Campbell opined that they could. "Joseph then brought up the subject of the Virgin Mary and her husband Joseph, and spoke of Christ in such a way that showed some scandalous doubts." (Was Brant perhaps expressing Arian heretical views?) (*ibid.*, 528)

It should be noted that Brant was well-known as a humorist in a quiet dry way. Once, it is said, he met Jemima Wilkinson, the "Publick Universal Friend"—she was a heretical Quaker who claimed to have been raised from the dead in 1776; she and her enthusiast devotees were the first white settlers in the Finger Lakes district, hence neighbors of the Iroquois. "When Jemima Wilkinson, (who professed to be, in her own person, the Savior of the world in his second appearance on earth,) was residing on her domain in western New York, surrounded by her deluded and subservient followers, she could not fail to attract the notice of Colonel Brant; while the celebrity of the Chieftain must, in turn, have forcibly commended itself to her attention. This led, of course, to a mutual desire to see each other, and Brant at length presented himself at her mansion, and requested an interview. After some formality he was admitted, and she addressed to him a few words in the way of welcome salutation. He replied to her by a formal speech in his own language, at the conclusion of which she informed him that she did not understand the language in which he spoke. He then addressed her in another Indian dialect, to which in like manner, she objected. After a pause, he commenced a speech in a third, and still different American language, when she interrupted him by the expression of dissatisfaction at his persisting to speak to her in terms she could

13 From a pamphlet, *The War Chief of the Six Nations* by Louis Aubrey Wood; no pagination, no publisher or place of publication; hence perhaps not to be trusted!

not understand. He arose with dignity, and with a significant motion of the hand, said— 'Madam, you are not the person you pretend to be. Jesus Christ can understand one language as well as another,' and simply took his leave." (Stone II 496-7, note.)

IN the Spring of 1772 Brant was staying at Ft Hunter, sharing the parsonage with Rev. Stuart. Together they were working on a Mohawk translation of the Bible, or parts of it. Stuart said of Brant that he was probably the only person in America equal to such a task. By 1774 the Gospel of Mark was almost finished, along with a Catechism and a short history of the Bible. Today an historical marker outside the parsonage commemorates this great work. Two years later, their labor was interrupted by the American Revolution (Kelsey 154).

Brant's ambition was always to learn Greek, so he could translate the Gospels direct from their source—but life and war kept him too busy. (A history of the Mohawks also never materialized, although fragments of it may survive in *The Book of Rites*, which will be discussed below) (Stone II 489).

On Brant's second visit to London in 1786, he handed the existing material over to the Society for Propagating the Gospel, and at their expense (with the patronage of the Bishop of London, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the King) it was printed (*ibid.*, 260-1). In this project Brant had help from his talented son-in-law and secretary Daniel Claus (Kelsey 387).

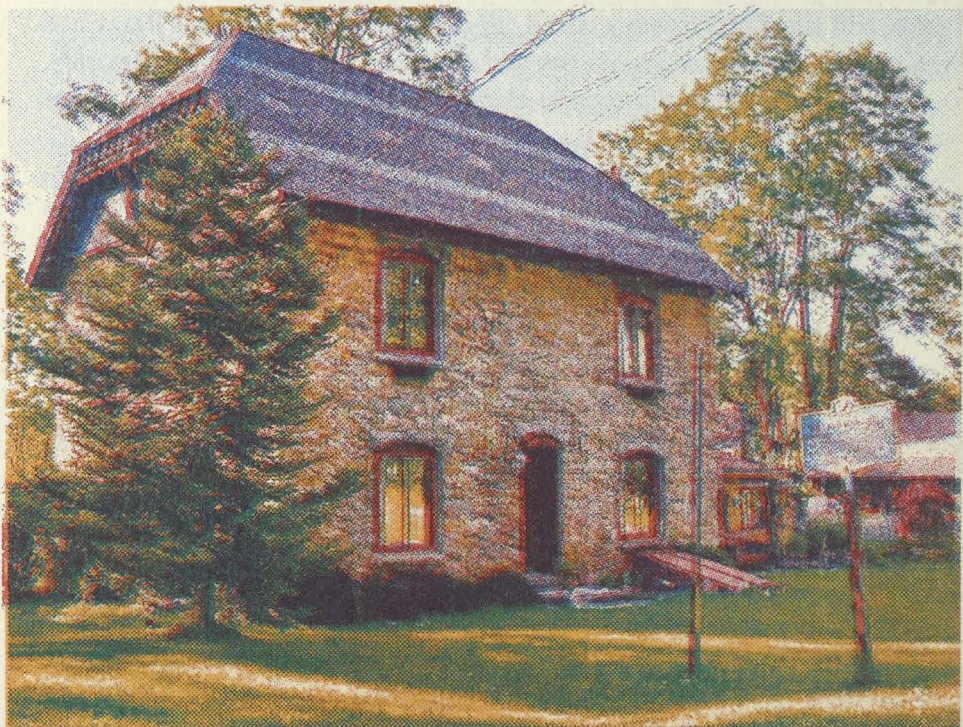
Brant later donated a copy to Harvard University—and the book is not very rare even now.

Another Brant secretary, the very talented Cherokee/Mohawk John Norton, translated the Gospel of John (Stone II 288); and according to the brother of Sir Walter Scott, Norton also rendered into Mohawk "The Lady of the Lake" (*Symposium*, Williams, 42). Another translator would be Brant's daughter Elizabeth Kerr (Stone II 535-6).

Not knowing any Mohawk myself, I cannot judge the translations by Brant, *et al.* I would imagine that someone well acquainted with the language (and its development since the 18th century) could gain some insight into the translators' ideas about Christianity by analyzing their choice of Mohawk terms to represent Biblical terms. For example, I learned that among the terms for God is *royaner* which means "lord" in the sense of a sachem or chief or noble, and is used often for the English term "Lord" ("Our Lord"). *Taronhiawagon*, "Holder of the Heavens," is sometimes identified with Hiawatha considered not so much as a human "prophet" but as the "great god of the Iroquois ..."; a deity who presides over fishing and hunting—who came from heaven in a white canoe and became human—and returned to the sky when his life on earth was done (hence analogous to Jesus in some respects).



Indian Castle Church built by Johnson. Photo © Cliff Oram.



Queen Anne Parsonage, built in 1712 in Ft. Hunter

Kayanerenh means both “organic (or constitutional) law” and also “peace,” or “great”—concepts central to the Iroquois idea of the White Roots of Peace (a cosmic pine tree) used as a term for the so-called constitution of the Haudenosaunee, and in the Bible translation for phrases such as “Prince of Peace,” or “give peace in our time.”

Rawenniyo, “Great Master,” was a term for God favored by Catholic missionaries; does this indicate a different theology than the Anglican choice of god-terms?¹⁴

IF the Christian Bible could become a Mohawk Bible, nevertheless that term must be shared with another book, originally composed in Mohawk, and thus more central to the Iroquois tradition—namely *The Book of Rites*. The existing transcript of this work will interest us not only for the light it can shed on Mohawk textuality—but also because of the role played in its transmission by the Indian family of Sir William Johnson.

It might be argued that Iroquois “textuality” in a broad sense begins before writing itself, with the medium known as *wampum*. Belts of wampum, composed of many small precious shell beads in only two colors—white and black (or dark purple)—are woven for a variety of purposes—diplomatic communications, commemorations of a major event, like a battle or treaty, or even more basically as manifestations of *consolation*.

A form of wampum was known to the Mississippian Mound Builders, and it may be that the northeast woodland tribes later adopted it along with other cultural traits of the Builders such as Effigy Mounds,¹⁵ but changing the meaning to suit their ideology of the refusal of agriculture and social hegemony, returning to hunting/gathering and relative egalitarianism. Thus Hiyawatha and Deganawidah, when introducing sweeping reforms (circa 1400 AD) amongst the Five Tribes in order to put an end to internecine war and *lex talionis*, adopted wampum as a consolation for grief and thus as the means for establishing the Great Peace—at least as an ideal. Wampum was neither a crude form of proto-writing nor a form of money. In fact it may be hypothesized that wampum served *to prevent the emergence of such exchange in the sense of alienation*. I say this on the basis of the theory propounded by Pierre Clastres,¹⁶ that humans have “always already” known the danger of writing and exchange as hegemonic

14 All these examples from the very important text of *The Iroquois Book of Rites* by Horatio Hale; the reprint edition I used has no page no's or date, no publisher or place of publication; the original was published by Brinton, Philadelphia PA, 1883.

15 See my “Shamanic Trace” in *Escape from the Nineteenth Century*, Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 1998.

16 *Society Against the State and Archaeology of Violence*

alienation—humans are not “primitive” in the sense of a naive innocent ignorance of any possible bullying and oppression—and institute “customs in common” to prevent the erosion of what might be called the “original” non-authoritarian fabric of the Social. We can imagine that the ancestral Iroquois knew about hegemony by observing (or even suffering) oppression and class warfare amongst the Mound Builders, and adopted wampum, to act as a “Clastrian device”¹⁷ to prevent such ills from re-appearing.

Remembering the significance of wampum is the task of the Record Keepers of the Onondaga of the central council Fire; without oral tradition the belts would be meaningless. (I believe such semiotic systems were also used by “neolithic” societies such as Gimbutas discusses in *The Language of the Goddess*.) I have seen the original wampum that marks the treaty between the Esopus Indians of my bioregion with the British (1660), and until recently (perhaps even now) some of Hiyawatha’s belts still survive; he “invented” two-row wampum using white beads to symbolize Peace (“White Roots of Peace”). (*Symposium*, Williams 120).

Turning now to Horatio Hale’s wonderful translation of *The Book of Rites*, we learn that the text was handed down orally (like the Vedas) from at least the 15th to the late 19th century, when it was felt to be endangered by collective loss of memory. A central chant of *The Book* consists of a list of fifty towns, each of which joined the original Confederation (some locations are now lost); and the names of their fifty chiefs as passed down to living chiefs like noble titles. This is the Condoling Council.

When a chief dies (or is killed), notice is given of mourning rites and choice of successor, and messengers are sent out with strings of wampum. The successor is chosen by the chief Matron of the deceased’s kindred. (Brant’s second wife held such a position.) So condolence consists of lamentation accompanied and soothed by wampum as memorials or symbolic equivalents of mourning and consolation. The speaker “wipes away tears [with wampum] that they may see again—opens their ears to hear again—removes choking from throats so they may again speak freely with friends—wipes bloodstains from sitting mats to assuage memory and prevent [retaliatory] feuding—which was Hiyawatha’s idea—to end revenge” (Hale). The wampum “archive” is interpreted to the whole assembly in order to repeat again the narrative of the Great Peace.

Hale’s translation was carried out with the help of Smoke Johnson, his son George, and the Rev. Issac Bearfoot (a Mohawk Anglican pastor). George Johnson held one of the fifty names—Deyonheghenh (“Double Life”); he had been educated by missionaries, and served as Government Interpreter for the Six Nations. This recension was augmented and

17 See “The Shamanic Trace” in *Escape from the Nineteenth Century*; also James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*.

ill-spelled brogue, but functioned brilliantly as an Indian agent (in Pennsylvania). He acted the bon vivant, drank creatively, and occasionally let slip his Jacobite sympathies.

Johnson bought his Lodge "jewels" (ceremonial accoutrements) from a dealer in New York City, whence also came his seal and charter. An upstairs room in Johnson Hall, Johnstown, his grand home, is now set up as a Mason's hall, and I suppose this is historically accurate. His Masonic silver is depicted in Godwin and Goodwillie's *Early Masonic Survivals in Upstate New York* (146-7).

Sir William's eldest son and heir, Sir John Johnson, was both knighted and initiated into Masonry around 1765-7 during a visit to England. "He was raised in the Royal Lodge of St James in London and in 1767 appointed Provincial Grand Master of New York" (Godwin & Goodwillie, 11).

On December 20, 1767, a Grand Lodge of Perfection was chartered at Albany and titled the Ineffable Lodge; Sir William served as the second Grand Master. It worked the fourth through the 14th degrees, devoted to the ineffable or unspeakable Name of the Deity. In this regard, Sir William attained "The Sublime Degree of Perfection" in 1769 (*ibid.* 12-14). Johnson could easily have contented himself with the three basic "Blue" degrees and not sought for higher mysteries. That he did so suggests that he took the mystical (and not merely the convivial²²) aspects of Masonry quite seriously; and this impression is reinforced by our knowledge of his 18th-century-style universal-curiosity (about Indian artifacts, astronomy, etc.), reminiscent of the Invisible College and Royal Society (both Masonic offshoots). The old notion of the 18th century as devoid of all spiritual and occult activity has long been dispelled by modern scholarship and need not be argued here. Sir William had his "Irish" side in any case, romantic and prone to imaginative flights.

As for Brant, during his London visit in 1776, he was invited to accept initiation, and was passed and raised, in a meeting of Hiram's Cliftonian Lodge no. 417, at the Falcon in Princes Street. A legend avers that he accepted his Masonic apron from none other than King George III—who, however, seems to have been the only member of his family who was not a Mason (difficult to believe!) (*ibid.* 14)

Among the noted members or guests of St Patrick's Lodge during and after the time of Sir William we should mention the schoolfellow of Brant, Rev. Samuel Kirkland, who however quarreled with Sir William and stopped attending. Later he became a missionary to the Oneidas and persuaded many of them to fight on the Patriot side in the Revolution (Taylor 65-6; this work is devoted to a comparative study of Kirkland and Brant).

The famous Swedish naturalist Peter Kalm attended St Patrick's

22 The Lodge was heavily billed for punch, rum, wine, beer, limes and sugar.

there flowed a holy well once drunk from by St Patrick himself. Every year a "patron" was held there: a pilgrimage, healing ceremony, feast, dance and sometimes a drunken brawl to follow. The date of this ceremony was the Eve of St-John the Baptist, 23 June, the Old Solstice, a day famously sacred to ... Freemasonry. Later in the "New" world Johnson continued to mark the day in Johnstown with a banquet for his Masonic Lodge of St Patrick.²⁰

The Masonry that would have been practised in Ireland in William's youth was called "Antient" to differentiate it from modern London Grand Lodge Masonry (officially founded in 1717). Later the two branches were reconciled and Antient Masonry survived only in some of the "Scottish" higher degrees like Templar and Rosy Cross. Martha Schuchard, whose work on mysticism and Masonry remains precious and unique, claims that some Antients were in fact Jacobites (like so many Irish and Scots of that era) and opposed to the Whig/ Hanoverian politics of the Grand Lodge. The Secret Grand Master of the Antients and Scottish Rite Masons was always the Stuart Pretender (the last perhaps being "Bonnie Prince Charlie"). During the French and Indian War a number of military Lodges operated in America under Irish officers in the British Army who were "Antients" and crypto-Jacobites.²¹ No matter how hard he tried to reconcile himself to the Protestant Succession and the British Empire, a sulphurous whiff of Jacobitism somehow clung to Johnson and his Irish cronies in Upstate New York. But Johnson—and Joseph—always remained loyal to the reigning House. Or—almost always.

The First "Union" Albany Lodge, from which Sir William received his charter for St Patrick's, began as an Antient Lodge (Godwin/Goodwillie 9). The Lodge was founded by Irish soldiers in the 1750s. Sir William seems to have been initiated in the late 1750s, founded his own Lodge in 1766, and was quickly appointed Provincial Grand Master (Flexner 336).

Sir William's nephew and son-in-law, Guy Johnson, was Senior Warden and his son-in-law Daniel Claus, Junior Warden (O'Toole 311-12). I cannot verify that Sir William initiated any Indians, but cannot imagine why he would not, as he shared his food and his house with them. O'Toole thinks he adopted Masonry in part as an augmentation of the Mohawk ritual he knew and appreciated (O'Toole 312).

Another important fellow Mason, George Croghan, was the father-in-law of Joseph Brant; an Irish immigrant, Croghan wrote in a witty and

20 O'Toole 59ff. O'Toole is very good on Sir William's Irish background, which he alone of all the biographers takes seriously.

21 I have no doubt that Anti-Hanoverian Jacobitism exercised an occult influence on American dreams of independence, and perhaps even on the course of the Revolution.

ill-spelled brogue, but functioned brilliantly as an Indian agent (in Pennsylvania). He acted the bon vivant, drank creatively, and occasionally let slip his Jacobite sympathies.

Johnson bought his Lodge "jewels" (ceremonial accoutrements) from a dealer in New York City, whence also came his seal and charter. An upstairs room in Johnson Hall, Johnstown, his grand home, is now set up as a Mason's hall, and I suppose this is historically accurate. His Masonic silver is depicted in Godwin and Goodwillie's *Early Masonic Survivals in Upstate New York* (146-7).

Sir William's eldest son and heir, Sir John Johnson, was both knighted and initiated into Masonry around 1765-7 during a visit to England. "He was raised in the Royal Lodge of St James in London and in 1767 appointed Provincial Grand Master of New York" (Godwin & Goodwillie, 11).

On December 20, 1767, a Grand Lodge of Perfection was chartered at Albany and titled the Ineffable Lodge; Sir William served as the second Grand Master. It worked the fourth through the 14th degrees, devoted to the ineffable or unspeakable Name of the Deity. In this regard, Sir William attained "The Sublime Degree of Perfection" in 1769 (*ibid.* 12-14). Johnson could easily have contented himself with the three basic "Blue" degrees and not sought for higher mysteries. That he did so suggests that he took the mystical (and not merely the convivial²²) aspects of Masonry quite seriously; and this impression is reinforced by our knowledge of his 18th-century-style universal curiosity (about Indian artifacts, astronomy, etc.), reminiscent of the Invisible College and Royal Society (both Masonic offshoots). The old notion of the 18th century as devoid of all spiritual and occult activity has long been dispelled by modern scholarship and need not be argued here. Sir William had his "Irish" side in any case, romantic and prone to imaginative flights.

As for Brant, during his London visit in 1776, he was invited to accept initiation, and was passed and raised, in a meeting of Hiram's Cliftonian Lodge no. 417, at the Falcon in Princes Street. A legend avers that he accepted his Masonic apron from none other than King George III—who, however, seems to have been the only member of his family who was not a Mason (difficult to believe!) (*ibid.* 14)

Among the noted members or guests of St Patrick's Lodge during and after the time of Sir William we should mention the schoolfellow of Brant, Rev. Samuel Kirkland, who however quarreled with Sir William and stopped attending. Later he became a missionary to the Oneidas and persuaded many of them to fight on the Patriot side in the Revolution (Taylor 65-6; this work is devoted to a comparative study of Kirkland and Brant).

The famous Swedish naturalist Peter Kalm attended St Patrick's

22 The Lodge was heavily billed for punch, rum, wine, beer, limes and sugar.



FRONTISPIECE

NE YAKAWEA
YONDEREANAYENDAGHKWA
OGHSERAGWEGOUH,

NEONI YAKAWEA
NE ORIGHWADOGEAGHTY
YONDATNEKOSSERAGHS

NEONI
TEKARIGHWAGEHHADONT,

OYAONI
ADEREANAYENT,
NE TEAS NIKARIWAKE
RADITSIHUHSTATSYGOWA
RONADERIGHWISSOH
GORAGHGOWA A-ONEA RODANHAOUH.

ONI,
WATKANISSA-AGHTOH
ODDYAKE ADEREANAYENT,
NEONI TSINIYOGHT-HARE NE
KAGHYADOGHSERADOGEAGHTY,
Newaböeny Akoyendarake neoni Abbondatteribbonny.

A-onea wadirörogghkwe, neoni Tekaweanadennyoh Kanyenkehäga Tikaweanondaghko, ne neane Raditfihuhstatfye ne Radirighwawakoughkgowa ronadanhä-ouh, Kanyenke waondye rhi-radinakeronnyo Ongwe-oeuwe.

KEAGAYE ASE YONDEREANAYENDAGHKWA.
ONI TAHOUGHSONDEROH
St. MARK RAORIGHWADOGEAGHTY,
Tekaweanadennyoh Kanyenkehäga Rakowänea
T'HAYENDANEGEA,
Roerwayats.

LONDON:
KARISTODARHO C. BUCKTON, GREAT PULNEY STREET,
GOLDEN SQUARE. 1787.

(*Symposium*, W. Burch, 7). John Norton, another brilliant "white Indian," secretary of Joseph Brant, was a Mason, as was Sir William's Mohawk mentor, King Hendrick (according to *Symposium*, Williams. 143-4). Did he join in London during his visit to Queen Anne? The later celebrity and Indian writer Ely Parker, a chief of the Seneca Wolf Clan, was also a Mason (*ibid.*, 120 n. 6).

The Revolution in the Mohawk Valley turned into a raging civil war, with families and neighbors at each others' throats, indulging in arson and massacre. The Mohawks fought on the Tory/Loyalist side, as did the Johnsons—but they were outnumbered by Whig/Patriots and eventually beaten. St Patrick's Lodge split down the middle, with the Butlers (of Butler's Rangers) on one side and General Herkimer with the rebels on the other.

Brant's sincerity as a Mason is attested by a number of incidents (some perhaps legendary) that took place during the war. Brant is said to have saved the life of a wounded Patriot, one Captain (later Colonel) M'Kinstry of Livingston Manor, substituting for the prisoner an ox to be roasted. Presumably M'Kinstry had somehow identified himself as a Mason.²³ The two men became good friends, and Brant "attended the Freemason's Lodge in the city of Hudson" when he visited M'Kinstry after the war, attracting "great attention" (Stone I 155-6).

During the battle of Minisink, a certain Major Wood of Orange County was taken prisoner by an ambush. "By some process or other, though not a Freemason, he had acquired a knowledge of the Master Mason's grand hailing signal of distress; and having been informed that Brant was a member of the brotherhood, he gave the mystic sign. Faithful to his pledge, the chieftain interposed and saved his life. "Discovering the imposition afterward, he was very indignant"; on Wood's safe return the first thing he did was become a Freemason; "This he considered himself in honor bound to do" (Stone I, 419).²⁴

After the war Brant moved to Canada—to Brant's Town, Grand River—where he founded Masonic Lodge No. 11 in 1797. Here he presided as Worshipful Master till at least 1801, dressed as a Mohawk chief with scalp-lock, paint and feathers (Kelsay, 536). What would King George have thought?

BRANT'S second trip to England began in December, 1785. He was hailed by British newsmongers as "the celebrated King of the Mohawks ... [an] extraordinary personage ... shrewd, intelligent ... possesses great

23 A Mason historian named H.L. Hosmer claimed this, although Kelsay says the incident was bogus (Godwin/Goodwillie 13).

24 Stone himself was a Mason who lapsed after the Morgan affair.

courage and ability as a warrior"; moreover "... it is conjectured that his embassy to the British Court is of great importance" (Stone II 249). Stone (II 250ff) describes Brant's social success with the aristocracy and in particular with "the late Duke of Northumberland, then Lord Percy ... [this acquaintance had begun in America, and] ripened into a lasting attachment, and was maintained by a correspondence, continued at intervals until his death" (*ibid.* 251). He hobnobbed with the King and Queen, and "stood in the grace of the Prince of Wales, who took great delight in his company; sometimes inviting him in his rambles to places 'very queer for a prince to go to,' as the old chief was wont to remark in after-life."

One of Brant's chief purposes in London was the printing of the "Mohawk Bible"—including his own translation of the Gospel of Mark, along with parts of the Psalms and Book of Common Prayer. The King himself patronized the project and his portrait graced the bi-lingual edition.

This constituted Brant's great contribution to the Anglican side of his heritage. (Stone II 260).

The talented half-Cherokee half-Scottish John Norton became Brant's adopted nephew and secretary, and a Mohawk war chief under the name Teyoninhokarawen. In 1804 he visited England and met the Duke of Northumberland, who (according to Taylor 360) had been adopted into the Mohawk tribe during his military stint in America during the Revolution. Taylor quips that Northumberland took his Mohawk identity "far too seriously." Certainly his family had a reputation for mysticism. His Elizabethan ancestor was known as the Wizard Earl, and was the patron of that extraordinary clique of freethinkers, Hermeticists and "natural philosophers" (i.e. scientists) known as the School of Night (probably because the Northumberland heraldic badge included three crescent moons²⁵). In any case the Duke who befriended Brant and Norton (I suspect they were all Freemasons) wrote some truly amazing letters to Brant, foreshadowing by centuries the modern critique of European "Civilization." He signed his missives "Northumberland, Thorighwegeri." Here is one of the Duke's messages to his fellow Mohawks:

"There are a number of well-meaning persons here, who are very desirous of forming a society to better (as they call it) the condition of our nation, by converting us from hunters and warriors into husbandmen. Let me strongly recommend it to you, and the rest of our chiefs, not to listen to such a proposition. Let our young men never exchange their liberty, and manly exercises, to

25 See my article "Dark House: Nocturnal Architecture in The Art of Leonora Carrington" in *Scapegoat 10: Night* (Toronto, 2017); see also M. Bradbrook, *The School of Night* (1936).



"King Hendrick" by Jan Verelst, 1710. Archives and Library of Canada.

become hewers of wood and drawers of water. If they will teach our women to spin and weave, this would be of use; but to endeavor to enervate our young men by doing nothing but tilling the earth, would be the greatest injury they could do the Five Nations. Nine hundred or a thousand warriors, inured to hardship by hunting, are a most respectable and independent body; but what would the same number of men become who were merely husbandmen? They would hardly rate a small parish, seeking for protection from



"Thayendanegea" (Joseph Brant) by George Romney, 1776. National Gallery of Canada.

others, scarcely heard of and known, and obliged tamely to submit to laws and regulations made by other people, and incapable of defending themselves. If you want an example of what the Five Nations would soon become, look only at the Stockbridge Indians. They, like us, were once a noble and formidable tribe; they now are less than women. Some of the persons who propose this plan, have their private reasons. They wish to go over among you, and when they have collected you together in order to teach you to cultivate the ground, they will then show you how very small a part of the land granted you is sufficient for to supply your wants, and will next endeavor to prevail upon you to grant them the remainder, in

gratitude for the trouble they have had in instructing you in agriculture. No, my dear friend and brother warrior, never suffer yourself, or your Chiefs, to be induced by plausible arguments. If you do, remember I now foretell that you will become a poor, dependent, and insignificant body, instead of continuing a free, warlike, and independent nation as we now are. I wish to see the Christian religion, sobriety, and good morals prevail among our nation; but let us continue free and independent as the air that blows upon us; let us continue hunters and warriors, capable of enforcing respect, and doing ourselves justice; but let us never submit to become the tillers of land, hewers of wood, and drawers of water, by the false and interested device of those who, from being our pretended friends, would soon become our imperious masters. Accept this, my good friend and brother warrior, from one who wishes the Five Nations ever to continue a formidable nation, commanding respect from all its neighbors, and who interests himself most sincerely in their welfare. Say every thing proper for me to my brother Chiefs, and believe me,

“Your faithful friend and brother warrior,

“Northumberland

“Thorighwageri

“Dezanhikar [Lord Percy] desires to return his thanks, and to offer his compliments to you and to Teyoninhokarawen [Norton], to whom I desire you to give my compliments likewise. I have received his letter, and will write to him by this mail if I possibly can.” (Stone Vol II 427-8)

(Obviously Northumberland’s son and heir, Lord Percy, has also been adopted into the tribe, and formed a particular friendship with Norton.)

Of course, the Duke’s romantic notion of rejecting agriculture and maintaining a hunter/gatherer economy was already too late; Brant himself had given in to agriculturist plans by this time. But the sentiment is not only romantic but highly intelligent, and we can see why Brant loved the eccentric Duke.

Sir William Johnson-Warraghiyagay²⁶—adopted into the Mohawks probably by King Hendrick around 1742 (O’Toole 68-9), began his life as a tribesman with an exercise in rhetorical eloquence, a talent highly regarded by many “oral/aural” cultures (such as , e.g., the Bedouin): “Brethren of the Confederate Nations here present: with this string of wampum I

²⁶ I wonder if this name was meant to pun on Warren, his uncle and employer at the time?

wipe away all tears from your eyes, and clear your throats, that we may cheerfully look one another in the face and that you may at this meeting attend and speake without constraint." (A String of Wampum)²⁷

The consolation rituals (enshrined in *The Book of Rites*) were always a specialty of Johnson's, and his fame as an orator began quickly to spread amongst the Nations. O'Toole describes (2-8) a number of Johnson's most famous Condolences, and then points out "William Johnson knew about grief and about the need to let it go." The Iroquois rituals paralleled the Irish mourning customs he knew as a youth; for example the O'gi'weoa'no, the female Chanters of the Dead, would seem almost indistinguishable from the semi-professional Irish women who performed *keening* at funerals. Johnson "lived the tradition, worked in the language ... for example, in 1756

About a mile from Onondaga, three Cayugas met us, and a halt was made of two hours, to settle the formalities of the condolence, agreeable to the ancient Custom of the Six Nations. Then I marched at the Head of the Chiefs singing the condoling song which contains the names, laws, and customs of their renowned ancestors, and praying that their deceased brother might be blessed with happiness in his other state." (Williams, *Symposium* 133)

Already in 1756 a certain syncretism had crept into the margins of Johnson's Condolences. Having commissioned an extra-long calumet (ritual pipe) and wampum belt for a council in Onondaga commemorating a deceased chief named Red Head, according to the Highest Form (already somewhat archaic), he added a "parade of Indians playing violins, flutes, and drums" (O'Toole 161-3), certainly an innovation.

Condolences were given for Europeans with close connections to the Iroquois such as Conrad Weiser, the Ephrata mystic and translator²⁸ (1761); in 1801 Joseph Brant consoled for the death of Nancy, the wife of Captain Daniel Claus (she was Johnson's eldest daughter) (Stone II 450-452).

Johnson himself was sent off by a Mohawk condolence, held the morning after the Anglican service (at St John's Church, Johnstown), by the Oneida Chief Conoghquieson on July 13, 1774; Sir William's nephew Guy Johnson was anointed as his successor (not Sir John Johnson, who was closer to Iroquois matrilineal practice, and may also have been better respected by the Indians) (O'Toole 323-5).

27 Pamphlet, *Indian Conference at Old Fort Johnson*, June-July 1755 (National Historic Landmarks, Montgomery County Historical Society, n.p., n.d. no pagination)

28 originally from Schoharie

Comparatively few modern historians seem to make much of heraldry. Perhaps there's a prejudice against family and its symbolism on ideological grounds which prevents its epistemological use—but this sentiment appears counterproductive to me. If "family" plays a psychological part in the history of an individual, how can it not serve as a touchstone for historical reality on a "macrocosmic" level?—a *key* to historical understanding? And heraldry as the *art* of this symbolism is, then, the key to the key.

William Johnson obviously had armigerous ambitions. He tinkered with the heraldic imagery of self with a design (1765) for a seal meant to signal his role to both English and Iroquois. (Heraldry plays a great role in Iroquois sociality through wampum, masks and other devices.) Six hands, representing the Nations, plus one representing Johnson, grasp the silver "Covenant Chain" that stands for confederation and diplomatic relations. A peace-pipe, a sacred pine tree ("the white roots of peace") and a Council Lodge (with smoke from its central fire) are placed above a European ship and an Indian canoe. (Williams, *Symposium* 121)

The visual language was in turn based on the imagery of a famous Two Row Wampum belt that marked the diplomatic link between the British and Haudenosaunee; the two rows of purple beads represented the two boats sailing the river of life side by side, parallel but not interfering with one another.

Around 1762 Sir William designed for himself a coat-of-arms to represent his baronetcy. According to one account (Flexner 306) this design was not approved by any college of heraldry till 1912, perhaps because the *feathers* on the Indians could not be understood heraldically except as *fleur-de-lys*—which cannot appear on someone's head! Obviously this is wrong:—feathers are understood perfectly in heraldry (as "plumes") and often adorn helmets etc. Possibly the delay was due to the rarity of an *American* award of arms.

The escutcheon (shield) is charged with a chevron argent (white or silver) with three scallop shells; often associated with the Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella, they probably connote Sir William's connection with St Oliver Plunkett. The field which is gules (red) is charged with three *fleur-de-lys* (strongly suggesting a French royal connection—although I cannot explain this) and "in chief" the Red Hand of Ulster, the mark of a baronet. The crest is an arm and hand with an arrow, and the drapery ("mantling") is suggested by six flags and three spears or tomahawks—all this in reference to the Six Nations, as are the supporters, two Mohawk warriors "proper" (i.e. depicted realistically) "wreathed round the waist with leaves vert (green) with bows and quivers." The motto, *Deo Regique Debeo* means "I owe God and King."²⁹ (See cover). As O'Toole remarks

²⁹ The family of "Johnson Baronets of New York" now lives in England; the

(306-7) the design is a curiously accurate map of Sir William's consciousness and life history. He used it as a bookplate. We can interpret it as an exercise in *syncretism*, the creative joining of Indian and European influences: Mohawk, Anglican, Freemason. I believe that a culture of tolerance and syncretism was beginning to develop "organically" in the Mohawk Valley, only to be interrupted and perhaps spoiled by the internecine and racial violence of the "Revolution." Not to claim the existence of a repressed utopia—but certainly of a "lost world."

"For most of [Sir William's] Indian neighbors, Christianity sat lightly on top of their own creation myths, animist beliefs in natural spirits and elaborate rituals designed to keep grief at bay" (O'Toole 68). As for the Europeans, for example the many Highland Scots (exiled for Jacobite and Catholic sympathies or simply exiled by the Clearances) who were invited by Sir William to settle on his lands, many of them were inclined to "go native," to marry Indians, live as hunters and "primitive" agriculturists (Calloway in *Symposium* 60-62). Patrick Campbell, a Tory soldier from Inverness, said that Highlanders and Indians "went hand in hand" and formed "a band of brothers" (*ibid.*)—and no doubt this amity extended to spiritual ideas and praxis as well as social and political. Campbell called Gaelic "the Indian language of my country." The frontier was "defined" by "fluidity of social interaction, creativity in cultural borrowing, and the possibility of self-transformation" (*ibid.*, 59 n. 109).

As O'Toole points out (in *Symposium* 91-92) Johnson was neither a simple loyal British agent nor a simple convert to Mohawk identity, but in a complex manner he was *both*: culturally fluid, "amphibious"—which explains why he was so valuable to both sides. For example, once when encouraging Iroquois to claim some land, he suggested to them that they mark their claim by carving a tree in the image of the *Onoyot*, the "phallic stone" representing the Tree of Great Peace, painted red, symbolizing "deep under-earth currents of water"—all reminiscent of Johnson's Irish childhood memories of the Hill of Tara, its sacred stone and springs (*ibid.*, 99-100) (see also O'Toole 58). Johnson of course even had two families—one Irish-American and one Mohawk; not a very ordinary situation for an Anglican squire. It can't be schizophrenia—Johnson was too efficient to be crazy!—so it must be a kind of syncretism. I believe this policy was deliberate, and I believe it was directly inspired by the "radical tolerance" propounded by Freemasonry.

No doubt the history and sociology of the Frontier played complex roles in the development of syncretistic trends; Johnson and Brant were not the only people with such tendencies. "Near the end of the eighteenth

8th in descent from Sir William, Culpoys Johnson, acceded to the title in 2003, according to *The Guardian* (O'Toole 332).

century, Handsome Lake, a sick and alcoholic old Seneca living on the Allegheny River but thinking himself close to death, was visited by three mystical beings wearing traditional Iroquois dress." The Iroquois Nations themselves might have come near extinction, so much had they suffered during the Revolution and from white suppression generally. "Handsome Lake's unearthly visitors came to help him understand what had happened, so that he could become a great prophet of revival" (O'Toole 48). Handsome Lake's vision around 1799 led him to urge a return to the old ways—but he advocated agriculture, which offended the pure traditionalists who (like the Duke of Northumberland—or the Iroquois Chief Red Jacket) wanted to preserve hunting and gathering. Handsome Lake made use of Christian ethics and symbolism as well as native lore. His cult is still practised today, in rivalry with missionary-created churches such as the Anglican and Presbyterian. At Grand River in Canada around the same time as Handsome Lake's appearance, a Mohawk "prophet" dreamed of a return to the old ways and renewal of ancient rites (Kelsay 611); such cults often appear in tribal cultures after their initial experience of colonialist imperialism; the Algonkians too had their prophets who, for instance, preached against the use of metal (a hopelessly Luddite cause, to be sure).

Joseph Brant himself was not immune to this spiritual revivalism, as the following history will demonstrate. First however a few words must be said about the most important Iroquois traditional festival, the Mid-Winter Ceremony, a kind of New Year or life-renewal festival dated according to the North-Pole constellation of the Great Bear, and doubtlessly related to the Algonkian Bear Sacrifice. The major events of the Midwinter Ceremony include the Big Head Dance, the Tobacco Invocation, the Dream Sharing, the Dances of the False Face Society (with their amazing carved wood masks), the Peach Stone Game, The Bear Dance,³⁰ the White Dog Sacrifice, Great Feather Dance, and other rituals. A complete analysis would require a book; here we limit ourselves to a few points.

As dogs, like horses, are said to be late arrivals in the "New World," it may be that the Dog Sacrifice has replaced a more archaic bear sacrifice.³¹ A white dog is strangled so that no blood is spilt, the body then decorated with red paint, feathers, beads and wampum, and ribbons. The dog is burned in a fire with tobacco so the smoke can carry the sacrifice to the Creator. Nowadays the dog has been replaced by a white basket of tobacco for humanitarian reasons.

In the opinion of some ethnographers, the White Dog Sacrifice may

³⁰ performed in a ring counter-clockwise in imitation of the Seven Stars around Polaris

³¹ See F. Speck, *The Celestial Bear*



"The First White Visitor at the Spring." Artist and date unknown.



High Rock Spring in Saratoga

be of relatively recent origins, not taking on its vaguely Christian aspects (sacrifice, redemption) till the reforms of Handsome Lake. It may have evolved from a custom of feasting on dog meat.³² In any case, some of

³² I have seen a detached page from an article in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* by Marshall Joseph Becker and Jonathan C. Lainey—but without the date of publication, page number, etc.

Brant's followers in Canada decided,³³ in the winter of 1800, to carry out a White Dog Sacrifice, described (by Kelsay 612-3) as an animal rite of purification and thanksgiving in which the dog was strangled (no drop of blood), painted and beribboned and hung on a pole. When Brant discovered this he at first reacted angrily and tore down the dog. But then he reconsidered and incorporated the ritual (perhaps in its reformed style without killing the dog?) into his new custom of an annual celebration on May Day, not to replace but to supplement Christianity.

This is extraordinary. May Day is of course the Irish/Celtic holiday of Beltane. Could this shift from Winter Solstice to Beltane reflect some influence from Sir William Johnson and/or his cohort of Irish immigrants? Brant's May Day was devoted to festivity—song and dance—games and gambling—a militia exercise—a grand feast with toast to the King, etc. (*ibid.*, 532-3).

Under the influence of Brant's revival of the Sacrifice, some Oneidas followed suit. According to Taylor (370-380) they were also inspired by Handsome Lake and some acquaintance with "Inner Light" doctrine taught by Quaker missionaries (who were popular because they took no interest in stealing Iroquois land.³⁴) Under the leadership of a chief named Blacksmith, who had acquired the "sacred stone" of the Oneidas, the revival offered lacrosse games and feasts, and by 1805 claimed the allegiance of about a third of the tribe.

According to Stone (II 444-5) Brant established his happy May Day festival (including cricket matches, very popular amongst the Iroquois) to supplement or take the place of seasonal rites such as the May Pole, banned by Puritan gloom-mongers but allowed—even encouraged—by Latitudinarian Anglican theologians like Archbishop Laud—or Morton of Merymount! By adding the White Dog Sacrifice to the proceedings Brant and his followers created a central ritual for a syncretistic religion: *Mohawk Anglican Freemasonry*.

Christian Indians "still believed in their old myths and mingled them ... with stories from the Bible. They still peopled the woods and fields with spirits, good and bad, and paid great regard to dreams and omens, and were terrified of witches" (Kelsay 40).

As for the "White Indians," I came across a quote attributed to one of them who had lived amongst the Iroquois for twenty years and described the life as one of "libertinage"—by which I think he meant that compared

33 Perhaps also influenced by the Mohawk visionary, who had been so instructed by Tharonhiawagon, "Uphold of the Skies" (Taylor 352).

34 This was not the case in Pennsylvania, where Algonkians felt cheated by Quakers.

to the repressed and morose life of Puritan proto-Capitalism practised amongst the Colonials, Indian life *felt* like perfect freedom.³⁵ As the Indians syncretized some European elements into their life and religion, so the Europeans and Africans (some of them—let's say the free spirits) adopted some Indian ways and beliefs.

In 1767 Warraghiyagay (Johnson) was feeling his age and suffering from what sounds like severe arthritis. His Indian associates, including probably Molly Brant, took him by boat and "litter" to New Lebanon Springs,³⁶ where he was treated by magico-medical herbal means and bathing in therapeutic springs (Flexner 315). Later that year, still ailing, Johnson was carried to the forested site of modern Saratoga Springs where he is reputed to have been the first European to bathe in and drink the waters of High Rock Spring, which later became the first commercial healing source in the growing town (and can still be seen and tasted today). (O'Toole 312-3)

Johnson preferred Molly's treatments to those of his white doctor (John Dease), saying "There are many simples [herbs] in this country which are, I believe, unknown to the learned, notwithstanding the surprising success with which they are administered by the Indians" (Berleth 146). In 1994 the Anglican Church of Canada honored Molly Brant³⁷ by adding her name to the Church calendar; prayers to be said on April 16—a kind of beatification (*Molly Brant* 93).

Johnson's son, Sir John, was once spotted sporting a hat with a rattlesnake band, a scalping knife, a tomahawk, and wearing a fringed deerskin (Berleth 186). Brant's son-in-law Aaron Hill used to paint his face before he read the Sunday Service (Kelsay 536).

Finally I'd like to quote at length from Brant's most famous letter, summing up his opinion of Civilization:

Stone II 481-483:

"My Dear Sir,

"Your letter came safe to hand. To give you entire

35 Sorry, I lost the reference. In Simms' *History of Schoharie County* (1845) we read of slaves taken prisoner by the Iroquois that they were seldom bound while on their way to Canada, nor were they compelled to run the gauntlet. They hardly ever returned to the States (but remained in Canada) generally adopting the Indian's life. (386)

36 near Ninham Mountain in modern Putnam County—the sacred land of the Wappinger tribe, which still holds ceremonies there.

37 And Rev. John Stuart; they are both buried in Kingston, Ontario, in St. Paul's churchyard.

satisfaction I must, I perceive, enter into the discussion of a subject on which I have often thought. My thoughts were my own, and being so different from the ideas entertained among your people, I should certainly have carried them with me to the grave, had I not received your obliging favor.

"You ask me, then, whether in my opinion civilization is favorable to human happiness? In answer to the question, it may be answered, that there are degrees of civilization, from Cannibals to the most polite of European nations. The question is not, then, whether a degree of refinement is not conducive to happiness; but whether you, or the natives of this land, have obtained this happy medium. On this subject we are at present, I presume, of very different opinions. You will, however, allow me in some respects to have had the advantage of you in forming my sentiments. I was, Sir, born of Indian parents, and lived while a child among those whom you are pleased to call savages; I was afterward sent to live among the white people, and educated at one of your schools; since which period I have been honored much beyond my deserts, by an acquaintance with a number of principle characters both in Europe and America. After all this experience, and after every exertion to divest myself of prejudice, I am obliged to give my opinion in favor of my own people. I will now, as much as I am able, collect together, and set before you, some of the reasons that have influenced my judgment on the subject now before us. In government you call civilized, the happiness of the people is constantly sacrificed to the splendor of empire. Hence your codes of criminal and civil laws have had their origin; hence your dungeons and prisons. I will not enlarge on an idea so singular in civilized life, and perhaps disagreeable to you, and will only observe, that among us we have *no* prisons; we have no pompous parade of courts; we have no written laws; and yet judges are as highly revered amongst us as they are among you, and their decisions are as much regarded.

"Property, to say the least, is as well guarded, and crimes are as impartially punished. We have among us no splendid villains above the control of our laws. Daring wickedness is here never suffered to triumph over helpless innocence. The estates of widows and orphans are never devoured by enterprising sharpers. In a word, we have no robbery under the color of law. No person among us desires any other reward for performing a brave and worthy action, but the consciousness of having served his nation. Our wise men are called Fathers; they truly sustain the character. They are always accessible, I will not say to the meanest of our people, for we have none mean but such as render themselves so by their vices.

"The palaces and prisons among you form a most dreadful contrast. Go to the former places, and you will see perhaps a *deformed piece of earth* assuming airs that become none but the Great Spirit above. Go to one of your prisons; here description utterly fails! Kill them, if you please; kill them, too, by tortures, but let the torture last no longer than a day. Those you call savages, relent; the most furious of our tormentors exhausts his rage in a few hours, and dispatches his unhappy victim with a sudden stroke. Perhaps it is eligible that incorrigible offenders should sometimes be cut off. Let it be done in a way that is not degrading to human nature. Let such unhappy men have an opportunity, by fortitude, of making atonement in some measure for the crimes they have committed during their lives.

"But for what are many of your prisoners confined?--for debt!--astonishing! --and will you ever again call the Indian nations cruel? Liberty, to a rational creature, as much exceeds property as the light of the sun does that of the most twinkling star. But you put them on a level, to the everlasting disgrace of civilization. I knew, while I lived among the white people, many of the most amiable contract debts, and I dare say with the best intentions. Both parties at the time of the contract expect to find their advantage. The debtor, we will suppose, by a train of unavoidable misfortunes, fails; here is no crime, nor even a fault; and yet your laws put it in the power of the creditor to throw the debtor into prison and confine him there for life! a punishment infinitely worse than death to a brave man! And I seriously declare, I had rather die by the most severe tortures ever inflicted on this continent, than languish in one of your prisons for a single year. Great Spirit of the Universe!--and do you call yourselves Christians? Does then the religion of Him whom you call your Savior, inspire this spirit, and lead to these practices? Surely no. It is recorded of him, that a bruised reed he never broke. Cease, then, to call yourselves Christians, lest you publish to the world your hypocrisy. Cease, too, to call other nations savage, when you are tenfold more the children of cruelty than they."

This eloquent rant (—Civilization IS its discontents) could have been the Manifesto of a new religion combining Mohawk Nature mysticism and condolence ritual, Anglican latitudinarianism and High Church ceremonialism, and Freemasonic-Hermetic-chemical spirituality and "radical tolerance"—a religion I've called "episcopaganism"—a syncretic religion that seems to have disappeared.

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APPENDIX

The following is reprinted from *Sir William Johnson Papers, Vol. III*, The University of the State of New York, 1921. Many thanks to to Sir Guy Johnson, 8th Baronet, of New York, for making it available here.

THE JOHNSON COAT OF ARMS

Sometime previous to February, 1749/50 Johnson had evidently taken up with his brother, Warren, the subject of having engraved for him the Johnson coat of arms. This is shown by a letter from Warren dated: "Dublin, Feby 24th 1749/50" in which he says: "I had our C^t of Arm's Cut in a very neat manner which I was to have Sent you with this but after I had got them from the Cuters found that they ware the O'Neal's but have Since ordered the Johnson's Arm's to be Cut as soon as possible which I Shall Send as soon as finished with the Pamphlets &ca." (*Sir William Johnson Papers*, I:266).

To what Johnson arms Warren was referring we can not determine. The Office of Arms at Dublin Castle under date of April 12, 1918, informed us that there was no coat of arms registered for the Johnson family other than that registered by Warren Johnson, February 12, 1774, which was the coat of arms of the O'Neills of Tyrone. Inquiry of the College of Arms in London brought the reply that the Johnson coat of arms was not registered there until 1843, and that it also was that of the O'Neills.

In the Johnson Papers there is no further mention of a coat of arms until January 10, 1763. In a letter from William Darlington of New York, to Johnson of that date the former writes: "Mr Weyman seems not to und[er]stand the directions in Regard to the Coat of Arm's & directed [me] to One Debrul's Engraver. Inclosed is a letter from him about [it?]"

The letter from De Bruls is as follows:

New York, Jan. 11, 1763

Sir:

Mr Darlington hath Acquainted me with Your Commands Concerning Your Coat of Arms, the Engraving of the Same will Cost Four Pound. The Printing and Colouring the Same proper will Cost Two Pound p^r Hund^d or Twenty Pound p^r Thousand.

.

Your Most Obed^t

Serv^t

Michael De B[ruls]

In Johnson's reply to this letter, which Johnson addressed not to De Bruls but to Darlington, on January 29, 1763, he objected to the price, said he could get the prints of them for less in London and finally commissioned Darlington to offer "£5 [Ⓕ] M for my Coat of Arms only printed & £4 for y^e plate w^h is to be mine."

Other letters on the subject have unfortunately been burned, but the *Calendar of the Sir William Johnson Manuscripts* shows (p. 160, 169) that Darlington wrote further about them on February 21, 1763, and that on May 6, 1763, he mentioned sending the copper plate and prints, and denounced De Bruls for his charges.

In some of Johnson's library books which have come down to us there are his bookplates bearing his coat of arms, an illustration of which appears in this volume. It would seem probable that these represent the order for one thousand copies which Johnson placed with De Bruls through Darlington. The use of his arms on his bookplate would explain the quantity of prints ordered. None of these plates which we have seen are in color, seeming to indicate that Johnson lived up to his intention of refusing to pay a price which he regarded as exorbitant.

At what time Johnson had drawn the design of his coat of arms from which De Bruls made the engraving we have no exact information. It may have been previous to the date of his brother Warren's letter, but it seems probable that it was between

1755 and 1762, for in the former year he received his baronetcy, giving him the right to have the red hand of Ulster in his coat of arms, and in the latter year appeared a plan or map of his Niagara campaign on which the same coat of arms appears as on the bookplate (Johnson Papers, III: vii, 81). The only marked difference between the two is that on the map the red hand of Ulster does not appear in the small escutcheon which is left blank and the panoply of flags appears on a standard apart from the coat of arms.

This coat of arms, however, was never registered in Dublin or in London, as we have seen above. In heraldic terms it was described in William Berry's *Encyclopedia Heraldica*, volume I, under "Bar." (published 1828-40): "Johnson, of New York, America, 1755; since of Twickenham, Middlesex, Arms, gu. on a chev. betw. three fleurs-de-lis ar. as many escallops of the field.—Crest, on a wreath, a cubit arm in armour, holding in the hand an arrow in bend sinister ppr. point downwards. Supporters, two North-American Indians ppr. wreathed round the waist with leaves vert crowned with fleurs-de-lis" [sic]. In volume II, of the same work under Johnson this description is given "per pale, az. and gu. on a chev. ar. betw. three fleurs-de-lis, as many escallops of the second." No motto is given in the index of mottoes which is given on page 225 of volume I.

In Burke's *General Armory*, edition of 1884, page 543, the following description is given: "Johnson (New York and Twickenham, co. Middlesex, bart.). Gu. on a chev. betw. three fleurs-de-lis ar. three escallops of the field. Crest—An arm couped at the elbow erect, holding an arrow ppr. Supporters—Two Indians wreathed about the waist with foliage, quivers over their left [inner] shoulders, bows in their exterior hands, and plumes on their heads all ppr. Motto—Deo regique debeo." Burke states that this coat of arms was registered, but the Office of Arms at Dublin and the College of Arms in London say that he is in error.

In spite of the fact that Johnson never had this coat of arms registered he had it put to use on the map and on his bookplate. He also had a seal made and used it on sealing wax on his letters. Of the latter we have a good example on a letter under date of December 22, 1772, now in the New York Historical Society.

Johnson himself seemingly made no claim to descent from the O'Neills. In the work entitled *The Baronetage of England* by E. Kimber and R. Johnson, published in London in 1771, volume III, page 142, it is stated: "Sir William Johnson is descended from a good family in the kingdom of Ireland. . . . Neither the Family Pedigree, or Arms, of Sir William, are yet entered in the Herald's office: so that we have no certain information of his marriage issue." On page 18 of the plates in the back of the same volume the place for the Johnson coat of arms is left blank.

On February 12, 1774, however, Warren Johnson, then of Damas[r?]town, County Meath, Ireland, brother of Sir William, registered his pedigree in the Office of Arms in Dublin, and in consequence of his descent from John O'Neill, of Dunganon (whose son, Thomas M^c Shane, was father of William Johnson, alias M^c Shane) was allowed the arms of the O'Neills of Tyrone.

This coat of arms is described in Burke's *General Armory* (edition of 1884, page 543) as follows: "Ar. two lions counter ramp. supporting a dexter hand gu. in chief three estoilles of the last, and in base a salmon naiant in water ppr. Crest — An arm gu. encircled with a ducal crown or, the hand grasping a sword ppr. pommel and hilt gold. Motto — Nec aspera terrent."

With the exception of the motto and also of the fact that it carries the word "dexter" instead of "sinister" this coat of arms is the same as that of the Upper Claneboy branch of the O'Neills. The question may well be raised as to whether the use of the dexter hand in this O'Neill coat of arms was not a change which had crept in over the centuries since the original

O'Neill had, according to tradition, cut off his *left* hand and cast it on shore so as to have a part of him touch land first. Both coats of arms have the red hand (sinister) of Ulster in the upper left hand corner (canton). The motto seems to have been added by the Johnsons as no other O'Neill family carries it.

Sir John Johnson, son of Sir William, who was knighted in England, by the king, November 22, 1765, and succeeded his father to the baronetcy in 1774, subsequently made use of this O'Neill coat of arms and the motto as we know from a wax seal on a letter written by him from Montreal, December 14, 1786, and now in the possession of Mr Willis T. Hanson, Jr., of Schenectady, N. Y. This seal, however, does not carry the red hand of Ulster in the upper left hand corner as it appears in various editions of Burke. Even this coat of arms, as we have seen above, was not registered in the College of Arms in London until 1843, before which date there was no coat of arms recorded to the Johnson family in that office.

In subsequent works on Baronetage, particularly in those of Burke, these two coats of arms, namely that used by Johnson himself in his bookplate, but never registered, and that of the O'Neills registered by Warren Johnson and used by Sir John, became confused, so that in some cases the red hand of Ulster was wrongly placed, the mottoes sometimes garbled and both of them used in the same coat of arms.

Stone, on the title page of his *Life of Sir William Johnson*, has the red hand of Ulster placed in an escutcheon in such a fashion as to obliterate one of the escallops, thus violating an essential principle of heraldry.

We are safe in assuming that so far as Johnson himself was concerned, use was made only of his original unregistered coat of arms. Between the time of his brother Warren's registration of the O'Neill coat of arms for the Johnson family in February, 1774, and Johnson's own death on July 11, 1774, the latter may have been made aware of the new coat of arms, but certainly too late for him to make much use of it.

The coat of arms which Johnson himself used certainly had particular significance for his life in the two Indian supporters, in the crest of a hand grasping an arrow and in the motto: *Deo regique debeo*. What Johnson had become he owed to his God and to his king. Of the significance of the fleurs-de-lis and the escallops little can be said. They were common heraldic devices used by designers for many patrons for whom and their families they had little or no meaning. It was probably the same in Johnson's case.

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